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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5263

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2677

DEPARTMENT FOR HA

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM, ELAB, AR
SUBJECT LABOR DISAPPEARANCES

1. SUMMARY. DEPASST SECRETARY SCHNIEDER (HA/HR) HAS ASKED FOR EMBASSY LATEST INFORMATION REGARDING WORKER OR TRADE UNION KIDNAPPINGS. THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES THE INFORMATION WE HAVE ON SUCH DISAPPEARANCES, THE NUMBERS INVOLVED, THE INGERENT PROBLEMS WE HAVE IN ASSESSING OUR SOURCES RELIABILITY, THE PATTERNS WE SEE IN SUCH INCIDENTS AND THE PROBABLE CAUSES AND SIGNIFICANCE. KEEPING THE LID ON LABOR HAS BEEN A HIGH GOVERNMENT PRIORITY SINCE THE MILITARY TOOK OVER IN 1976 AND STRIKES ARE CONSIDERED SUBVERSIVE. MOST LABOR ARRESTS TOOK PLACE SHORTLY FOLLOWING THE COUP, BUT SURVEILLANCE AND REPRESSION CONTINUE, WITH HEIGHTENED SECURITY MEASURES TAKING PLACE DURING MOMENTS OF ILLEGAL STRIKE ACTIVITY AS OCCURERED LAST NOVEMBER AND AGAIN LAST MONTH. IF DEPARTMENT HAS ANY INFORMATION WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE PATTERN OF WORKER DISAPPEARANCES HAS CHANGED OR THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT UPSURGE IN REPRESSION AGAINST
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THE WORKER SECTOR IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY OF 1978,

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY DRadke DATE 4/20/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING DETAILS IN ORDER TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN REVEIWEING OUR RECORDS CONCERNING DISAPPEARANCES OR DENTENTIONS OF UNION LEADERS AND WORKERS, WE FIND THAT MOST OF THE NAMES WE HAVE WERE EXTRACTED FROM DOCUMENTS RECEIVED BY THE EMBASSY OR OTHERWISE OBTAINED AS FOLLOWS:
-- A STATEMENT DATED JANUARY 14, 1977, PREPARED BY THE SELF STYLED "FIRST OF MAY CLASSIST UNION GROUP"-- AN ORGANIZATION ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION, BUT WHOSE RHETORIC APPEARS TO HAVE A MILDLY TROTSKYITE RING. IT MAY BE AN OFF SHOOT OF THE SMALL REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY (PCR).
-- A COMPOSITE LIST OF 230 "KNOWN TRADE UNION LEADERS (WHO HAVE BEEN) PERSECUTED, FIRED OR EXILED SINCE MARCH 24, 1976" PREPARED BY ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS FOR THE ICFTU-ORIT (OTTO KERSTEN) DELEGATION IN FEBRUARY 1977.
-- AN UNDATED DRAFT COPY OF A LETTER PREPARED BY THE LABOR MINISTRY FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO TRANSMIT TO THE ICFTU CONTAINING 235 NAMES AND THE DISPOSITION OR STATUS OF EACH CASE.
-- AN UNDATED MEMO (CIRCA MID 1977) PREPARED FOR LABATT BY ORECSUR/CLAT.
-- A LETTER AND ENCLOSURES DATED APRIL 30, 1977 FROM THE "FIRST OF MAY UNION GROUP" ADDRESSED TO "AFL-CIO/ORIT/ ICFTU/IMF" (WE BELIEVE THIS WAS PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH A VISIT BY UAWS ESTEBAN TORRES).
-- AN UNDATED AND UNSIGNED MEMO PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR CODEL YATRON BY LIGHT AND POWER UNION LEADER JUAN JOSE TACCONE.
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-- SEVERAL LISTS PREPARED BY THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (PST) IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1977 OF ARRESTED PARTY MEMBERS (NOT ALL WORKERS) FOR DELIVERY TO CODEL YATRON, MS DERIAN OR THE SOL CHAIKIN SOLIDARITY TEAM (AFL-CIO).
-- A LIST PRESENTED TO US BY THE BELGIAN EMBASSY OF ARGENTINES WHOM THE BELGIAN UNIONS WISH TO LOCATE AND ASSIST.
-- WALK INS OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL DENUNCIATIONS REGISTERED WITH THE EMBASSY BY NEW. OF KIN OR THE FRIENDS OF VICTIMS.

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3. IN ALL, WE HAVE SLIGHTLY OVER 300 NAMES THUS DERIVED (AFTER CORRECTING FOR DUPLICATION) OF DISAPPEARED, DEAD, OR DETAINED "WORKERS" UNDER PEN. THE ACT OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OR CIVIL OR MILITARY JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES ON ACCOUNT OF SUSPECTED INVOLVEMENT IN EITHER CORRUPTION OR SUBVERSIVE/TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, SOME OF WHICH RELATE TO INCIDENTS ORIGINATING BEFORE THE MARCH 1976 COUP. (WE PUT "WORKERS" IN QUOTES, BECASE INADVERTENTLY THERE MAY BE A FEW NAMES INCLUDED WHICH PROBABLY WOULD FIT BETTER IN THE PROFESSIONAL OR SOME OTHER CATEGORY). SOME OF THOSE APPEARING AS DETAINED IN OUR LISTS HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED, INCLUDING TWO OR THREE WHO AGAIN ARE ACTIVE IN TRADE UNION AFFAIRS.

4. THE DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN PARA 2 ALLEGE MANY OTHER INSTANCES OF REPRESSION BY THE SECURITY FORCES AGAINST WORKERS AND LEADERS, BUT WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE NAMES OF THE VICTIMES INVOLVED IN THOSE CASES. FROM TIME TO TIME, SE ALSO GET REPORTS OF MILITARY/ LICE OPERATIONS, STAKEOUTS, SEARCHES AND SEIZURES, GUN BATTLES AND ARRESTS IN THE FACOTRY DISTRICTS, USUALLY WITHOUT ANY CASUALTY LISTS OR MUCH DETAIL BEING SUPPLIED. SOMETIMES SUCH INCIDENTS ARE REPORTED IN THE PRESS, BUT MORE OFTEN THEY ARE NOT. SOMETIMES WE BELIEVE OUR SOURCES ARE REPORTING ACCURATELY; MANY
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TIMES WE ARE IN DOUBT BECAUSE OF THE AMBIGUITY OF THE INFORMATION, IN WHIC CASE WE RECORD IT AS RAW AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2677

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5. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS THAT IMMEDIATELY COME TO MIND:
-- THERE WAS AN INCIDENT LAST OCTOBER IN WHIC MONTONEROS SUSPECTS WERE KILLED JUST OUTSIDE THE FENCE OF CHRYSLERS MAIN PLANT BY SECURITY FORCES. THE MANAGEMENT CONFIRMED THE INCIDENT *TO US. THE INDIVIDUALS WERE NOT CHRYSLER EMPLOYEES,* BUT PLANT PERSONNEL INTERPRETED THE ACTION AS A WARNING AGAINST STIRRING UP LABOR TROUBLE.
-- WE HAVE RECENTLY HEAR ALLEGATIONS FROM SEVERALL SOURCES THAT 19 UNNAMED MEMBERS OF THE CERAMICS WORKERS UNION WERE KIDNAPPED LAST NOVEMBER AND KILLED IN CAMPO DE MAYO. THE CERAMICS UNION REPORTEDLY WAS HEAVILY INFILTRATED BY MONTONEROS AT ONE TIME. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, THIS INCIDENT MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO A LONGSTANDING LABOR CONFLICT IN A CERAMICS PLANT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BUENOS AIRES (IN VILLA ADELINA).
-- THERE WASALSO A FLURRY OF REPORTED ARRESTS, DISAPPEARANCES AND EVEN ONE OR TWO ALLEGED SHOTINGS OFSTRIKE PROVOCATEURS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE RAILROAD AND TRANSPORTATION STRIKES LAST NOVEMBER (SE 77 BUENOS
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MENTIONED SEVERAL ABDUCTIONS OF SEC POWER UTILITY SHOP STEWARD AND OTHER WORKER ACTIVISTS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. B1,EC HAS BEEN UNHELPFUL IN ASSISTING US TO ANSWER IT STATE 288837 HOWEVER, WE SUSPECT BECAUSE OF THE CHASM IN THIS UNION BETWEEN THE PERONIST LEADERSHIP AND THE REMNANTS OF THE TROTSKYITE ELEMENTS AT THE RANK AND FILE LEVEL IN THE CORDOBA LOCAL).

- DURING THE RECENT ABORTED STRIKE OF THE LOCOMOTIVE MAIN ENGINEERS IN MARCH, THREE UNION LOCAL LEADERS WERE ARRESTED AND ARE NOW BEING HELD PENDINGCRIMINAL CHARGES (BUENOS AIRES 1798 AND 1752), WHILE FIVE OTHERS REPORTEDLY ESCAPED THE DRAGNET.

-- ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO AT LEAST FIVE UNION ADTIVISTS FROM DIFFERENT UNIONS (CIVIL SERVICE, HEALTH AND TEXTILES) DISAPPEARED IN SEPARATE AND PROBABLY UNRELATED INCIDENTS.

-- A MEMBER OF THE "COMMITTEE OF S. B1,EC INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR AT LUNCH ON MARCH 28 THAT HIS SECRETARY PLUS SEVEN OTHERS WERE TAKEN FROM A HOUSE THE EVENING BEFORE.

6. THE LABOR SECTOR NATURALLY HAS BEEN AN AREA OF HIGH PRIORITY CONCERN TO THE SECURITY FORCES SINCE THE MILITARY *TOOK OVER IN 1976-- ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF WORKER DISCONTENT* OVER THE GOVERNMENT WAGE AND ECONOMIC POLICIES. UNDER THIS GOVERNMENTS EMERGENCY SECURYTY LAWS, STRIKES ARE TANTAMOUNT TO SUBVERSION AND ARE SUBJECT TO HEAVY PENAL TIES. MOST OF THE UNION LEADERS AND MEMBERS CURRENTLY UNDER OFFICIAL DETENTION WERE PICKED UP IN THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE COUP IN AN EFFORT TO CLEAN OUT THE FACTORIES OF SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES AS WELL AS TO

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LOCK UP THE TOP PERONIST LEADERS CONNECTED WITH THE DEPOSED REGIME OF MRS PERON. ABOUT A YEAR AGO, HOWEVER, CAPTURED MONTONERO DOCUMENTS BEGAN REVEALING A SHIFT TACTICS AWAY FROM DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH SECURITY FORCES IN ARMED CLASHES TOWARDS A HEIGHTENED EMPHASIS ON INFILTRATING THE LABOR SECTOR IN AN EFFORT *TO GAIN WORKER SYMPATHY BY PROVOKING AND SUPPORTING* STRIKE ACTIVITY AND BY ASSASSINATING INDUSTRY FIGURES KNOWN FOR THEIR ANTI LABOR ATTITUDES. (CF. BUENOS AIRES A-151 OF 12/6/77 FOR A REPORT ON THE MONTONEROS ZONAL BULLETIN OF MID 1977). WHILE THE MONTONEROS HAVE

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BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN CONVERTING LABOR RANKS *TO THEIR CAUSE, IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT THE* SECURITY FORCES REDOUBLED OR AT LEAST REVIEWED THEIR COUNTERMEASURES IN THE LABOR SECTOR IN RESPONE TO THE NEW MONTONERO THREAT. INDEED, REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT REPRESSION OF WORKERS HEIGHTENED DURING THE NOVEMBER STRIKE PERIOD LAST YEAR AND AGAIN DURING THE ABORTED STRIKE OF THE LOCOMOTIVE TRAIN ENGINEERS LAST MONTH. SECURITY FORCES PARTICULARLY ANTICIPATED POSSIBLE LABOR TROUBLE BETWEEN JANUARY AND MARCH OF THIS YEAR. A HIGH RANKING SECURYTY SOURCE RECENTLY TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE REASON THE NOVEMBER STRIKE GOT OUT OF HAND WAS THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROCRATINATED TOO LONT BEFORE TAKING ADEQUATE MEASURES, WHILE THE REASON THAT THE TRAIN ENGINEERS STIKE CALL FAILED LAST MONTH WAS BECAUSE THE SECURITY FORCES MOVED IN QUICKLY TO HEAD IT OFF. SECURITY OFFICERS ALSO CONFIRM THAT THE JAILING OF THE *TOP PERONIST LABOR LEADERS OF THE CGT AND THE NEUTRALIZATION* OF OTHER TOP NATIONAL LEADERS UNDER THE CURRENT SUSPENSION OF UNION ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS HAVE LEFT THE FIELD OPEN FOR WOULD BE AGITATORS AT THE PLANT LEVEL, THUS REQUIRING A HEAVIER ASSIGNMENT OF SECURITY FORCES TO THE LABOR BEAT THAN MIGHT ORDINARILY BE THE CASE.

7. NEVERTHELESS, THE EMBASSY IS UNAWARE OF ANY EXTRA
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ORDINARY INCREASE IN WORKER KIDNAPPINGS IN RECENT MONTHS WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST A NEW PATTERN OF GOVERNMENT REPRESSION IN THE LABOR SECTOR. ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER THEY PERCEIVED A NEW MOVE OF REPRESSION AGAINST WORKER LEADERS, TWO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 6, THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENTS TOP AD HOC SECRETARIAT AT THE MOMENT, DENIED THAT THIS PAST WEEKEND.

8. HA/HR EVIDENTLY HAS SOME INFORMATION SUGGESTING A SIGNIFICANT UPSURGE OF LABOR KIDNAPPINGS THIS PAST JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, WHICH DOES NOT COINCIDE WITH OUR *INFORMATION. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE* DETAILS SO THAT WE CAN LOOK INTO THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM FURTHER.
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